



Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario
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FVGO elect new leader, confirm commitment

RIDGETOWN, ON. – Confirming its commitment to farmers throughout Ontario, the Fresh Vegetable Growers' of Ontario (FVGO) recently elected a new leader at its inaugural organization annual meeting.

“For too long, vegetable farmers in this province have lacked the organization that other farmers, in other sectors, take for granted,” said Larry Verbeke, the newly elected President of the FVGO. “In horticulture, we have long been told to get ourselves organized – we’ve done that, and now, we are moving forward in a direction that our farmers are telling us to do. We’re listening to our members, those farmers who are wanting a voice at both the retail table and at the organizational table.”

Verbeke, a third generation farmer in the Leamington area, takes over from incumbent leader John Jaques, who will still continue with the executive in the capacity of Past President.

“The FVGO has stated, quite clearly, that it will be working on a quarter million dollar marketing and promotion campaign of fresh vegetables, acquiring more tools for our dwindling toolbox by actively lobbying for minor use registrations, and advocating research projects that is of benefit to the farmer and the consumer first and foremost rather than the specific interests of an institution or scientist,” said Jaques. “Our farmers, through a series of surveys we’ve conducted, have provided the focus and direction that this organization will follow over the coming year.”

The FVGO also elected Jeff Wilson as Vice-President. The long-time farm advocate from Orton is also the Chair of the Asparagus Growers' of Ontario. Rounding out the executive is Jason Ryder who will be the association's Secretary/Treasurer. Ryder farms with his family outside of Delhi.

Directors for the upcoming year are Martin Streef, Don Almas, John Smits, Charles Welsh, Mary Shabatura, and Tom Miedema.

“There is a great deal of work ahead of us,” said Verbeke. “But, our executive and our board brings a great deal of farming and organization experience to the table. All of us have been involved, at one time or another, with local, provincial, and national organizations. We know what needs to be done to ensure that farmers' livelihoods are not

being placed in jeopardy because of inaction or worse – actions that no longer reflect the farming community.

“We intend to work harmoniously with other organizations but we will put the interests of our organization’s members at the forefront of all of our efforts.”

The FVGO represents all crucifer crops, low acreage and specialty crops, root, bulb, and leafy vegetables, tomatoes, sweet corn, peas, and beans. It will not be involved in potatoes, rutabaga, garlic, processing vegetables, asparagus or greenhouse products – since those fresh products are already covered by their respective organizations.

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